

I think part of what we are about as Senators is to try to stay in close touch with the public, with people in our States, whatever decision we make. It can be a matter of individual conscience, but I think it is terribly important that we operate as a representative body, as the U.S. Senate, as a part of representative democracy of the United States of America. We can't on this question, we can't on these questions, if we go into closed session.

THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, regarding the President's speech last night, I will start out with his style. I thought it was rather amazing that, given all that has happened—like our trial here—that the President came before the Congress and delivered a very good speech. He certainly had confidence and he outlined some important proposals.

I think his proposal dealing with Social Security was extremely important. I think it is a solid proposal. And it does not go in the direction of some of the privatization schemes which I think would have taken the "security" out of Social Security. But it also recognizes we need to make some changes and we need to make sure that we support or save the Social Security system. But we keep it as a social insurance program. It is a contract. It is for all the people in the country.

The emphasis on the COPS Program, community policing, is right on the mark. The law enforcement community in Minnesota has done some great work with this community policing program, including dealing with all of the issues having to do with domestic violence. Every 13 seconds a woman is battered in the United States of America in her home—a home should be a safe place—and many children see this, as well. God knows what the effect is on the children.

Mr. President, I also want to just be very honest about my disappointment in this speech. Here we are, going into the next century, the next millennium. Here we have this great economy, booming along. We hear about it all the time. This is our opportunity now to take bold initiatives, to put forth bold proposals that really respond to children in America.

The President talked about low-income, elderly citizens, many of them women. I think it is terribly important to address that reality. Mr. President, what about the reality of close to 1 out of 4 children under the age of 3 growing up poor in our country? What about the reality of 1 out of every 2 children of color under the age of 3 growing up poor in our country?

We have heard from the experts. We have had the conferences. We have seen the studies. We know about the in-

volvement of the brain. We know we have to get it right for these children by age 3 or many of them will never be able to do well in school and never be able to do well in life.

I see a real disconnect between some of the words uttered by our President and his proposals that don't meet the challenge. The commitment of resources to affordable child care for so many families in our country doesn't even come close to meeting the need. I thought we were going to make a commitment to affordable child care for everyone, not just for welfare mothers and their children. Not that we've done enough for those on welfare. That, in and of itself, is important, and we are not doing nearly as well as we should. But we need to help not just low income, but working income, moderate income, even middle-income families, for whom good child care is a huge expense, so that their children can get the best of nurturing and intellectual stimulation. But this is not in this budget. It is not in this budget. There's money, but the President's solutions are not in the same scope as the problems themselves.

The President has a proposal that focuses on afterschool care. I am all for that. But when I think about the poverty of children in our country, when I think about a set of social arrangements that allow children to be the most poverty-stricken group in our country, when I think about what a national disgrace that is, and when I think about all we should be doing to make sure that every child in our country has the same opportunity to reach his and her full potential, and when I think about what we are going to be asking our children to carry on their shoulders in the next century, I don't see in the President's State of the Union Address a bold agenda that would lead to the dramatic improvement of the lives of so many children in our country. Why the timidity? With this economy booming along, in the words of Rabbi Hillel, "If not now, when?" If we are not going to speak for our children now, when will we? If we are not going to move forward with bold proposals, start with affordable child care, when will we?

Finally, Mr. President, on the health care front, some important proposals:

Give credit where credit should be given. I meet with people in the disabilities community and this is a huge problem. You want to work and then when you get a job you lose your medical assistance and you are worse off. To be able to carry health care coverage for people in the disabilities community so more people can work—yes.

A tax credit proposal that says if you have a problem of catastrophic expenses—I know what this is about; I had two parents with Parkinson's disease—as a family, you can get up to a \$1,000 tax credit per year. But this

credit is not refundable. Why in the world do we have a tax credit that is not refundable, in which case families with incomes under \$30,000 a year get no help whatever? Are we worried about providing assistance to low-income people, poor people, as if they have it made in America?

Second of all, catastrophic expenses go way beyond \$1,000 a year.

And here is what I don't understand about the President's downsized agenda. Whatever happened to universal health care coverage? Now we have 44 million people with no health insurance, more than when we started the debate several years ago. Now we have another 44 million people who are underinsured. We have people falling between the cracks. They are not old enough for Medicare, prescription drug costs are not covered, they can't afford catastrophic expenses, they are not poor enough for medical assistance, they are getting dropped for coverage by their employers, and copay and deductibles are going up and are way too high a percentage of family income.

Several years ago, the health insurance industry took universal health care coverage off the table. We ought to put it back on the table. I don't understand the timidity of the President's State of the Union Address when it comes to making sure that we can provide good health care coverage for all of our citizens. Our economy is booming, we are going into the next century, this is the time for bold initiatives. This is not the time for timidity. This is a time to make a connection between the words we speak and the problems we identify and the challenges we say we have as a Nation and the investment.

Where is the investment in the health, skills, intellect and character of our children in America? Where is the investment to make sure that every citizen has health coverage that he and she can afford for themselves and their families? I didn't see it in the President's State of the Union Address. For that reason, I am disappointed. I believe our country can do better. I believe our country can do better. I believe the U.S. Congress can do better, and I hope that we will.

THE PRIVATE PROPERTY FAIRNESS ACT OF 1999

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I have introduced S. 246, the Private Property Fairness Act of 1999. This bill will help ensure that when the Government issues regulations for the benefit of the public as a whole, it does not saddle just a few landowners with the whole cost of compliance. This bill will help enforce the U.S. Constitution's guarantee that the Federal Government cannot take private property without paying just compensation to the owner.